



D 2025 010

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to a Severe Weather Event Resulting in Dangerous Fire Conditions in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2, of the Colorado Constitution and the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to a severe weather event resulting in dangerous fire conditions in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties, enabling State agencies to coordinate fire suppression, response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts.

I. Background and Purpose

The Governor is responsible for meeting the dangers to the State and people presented by disasters. C.R.S. § 24-33.5-704(1). The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act defines a disaster as “the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin, including but not limited to fire.” C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

On July 10, 2025, a widespread and severe weather event resulted in dangerous fire conditions leading to more than twenty lightning-caused wildfires burning uncontained across the western slope of Colorado (Western Colorado Fires). These fires include the South Rim Fire in Montrose County, the Turner Gulch Fire in Mesa County, and the Deer Creek Fire in Montrose County, among others. The South Rim Fire burned in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, forcing the closure of the North Rim portion of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park until July 30, 2025, and the South Rim portion of the National Park was still closed due to firefighting, repair, and rehabilitation efforts as of August 6, 2025. The Turner Gulch Fire resulted in the closure of Colorado Highway 141 and evacuations of dozens of residences. The Deer Creek Fire started in eastern Utah, transferred into Colorado, burned into Montrose County, and threatened the Highway 90 corridor and the community of Paradox.

The Western Colorado Fires were located in remote areas in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties on Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, United States Forest Service, and State and private lands, with steep, inaccessible terrain, and heavy fuels that did not allow for access and safe engagement on the fires. The fires continued to grow, threatening homes and infrastructure, and exceeding normal fire resource and incident management capabilities of the affected counties. A preliminary assessment shows that the Western Colorado Fires have damaged a number of structures, including a United States Forest Service cabin, two

outbuildings, and a pavilion. Additionally, within a three mile radius of the fires, an electrical substation and powerplant were threatened.

On July 13, 2025, at approximately 11:42 AM, I verbally declared a disaster emergency due to a severe weather event resulting in dangerous fire conditions in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties and activated the State of Colorado Emergency Operations Plan and directed the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to take all necessary and appropriate State actions to assist the affected jurisdictions with their fire suppression, response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts.

As of August 6, 2025, the South Rim Fire was 52% contained, the Turner Gulch Fire was 49% contained, and the Deer Creek Fire was 95% contained.

II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The severe weather event resulting in dangerous fire conditions and the subsequent Western Colorado Fires and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of July 13, 2025, declaring a disaster emergency, is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it were contained within this Executive Order.
- B. My verbal order of July 13, 2025 activated the State Emergency Operations Plan. All State departments and agencies are authorized to take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or their delegate of the OEM pursuant to the State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment, as necessary.
- C. I direct State agencies to pursue all available federal funding for response and recovery operations.
- D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4)(b), funds in the Disaster Emergency Fund (DEF) are insufficient to pay for fire suppression, response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the severe weather event resulting in dangerous fire conditions and the subsequent Western Colorado Fires. Therefore, I order that one million eight hundred eighty-nine thousand seven hundred dollars (\$1,889,700) be transferred from the State Emergency Reserve Cash Fund (SERCF) to the DEF. I encumber one million eight hundred eighty-nine thousand seven hundred dollars (\$1,889,700) in the DEF to pay for fire suppression, response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the severe weather event resulting in dangerous fire conditions and the subsequent Western Colorado Fires.
- E. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-705.4(5), the Director of the OEM is authorized and directed to allocate the funding described in Section II(D) to the appropriate

government agencies and nonprofit organizations and execute awards, purchase orders, or other mechanisms to effect the allocation of funds. The funds described in Section II(D) above shall remain available for this purpose until seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the DEF.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from July 13, 2025, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(D) above shall remain available for the described purposes for seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado this eighth
day of August, 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Jared Polis
Governor